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RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 0690
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE PRIORITY 4332
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY 0988
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY 0803
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY 0722
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SUBJECT: WATCHLISTS AT DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S POINTS OF ENTRY

REF: A. STATE 114021

[1](#)B. SANTO DOMINGO 2568

Classified By: Classified By: Charge Roland W. Bullen for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) Summary. With reftels Embassy reported on the Dominican Republic's immigration database system located at seaports, airports, and border crossing points. New information reveals that at points of entry only the Dominican intelligence agency has access to watchlists provided by Interpol and other Dominican government agencies. End Summary.

REFTEL B - WESTERN HEMISPHERE IMMIGRATION SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

[1](#)2. (S) With reftel A Washington analysts requested information about the Dominican Republic's immigration system, specifically regarding the tracking of entries and exits, limitations of the immigration database, biometrics, and watchlists. We received this information from the Dominican National Immigration office and reported it in reftel B. Although the immigration office provided the Embassy with accurate information, it was not complete because Dominican immigration officials do not have access to other database systems that include additional watchlists. According to the security manager of Santo Domingo's Las Americas international airport (a well-connected former Dominican military general), Dominican immigration officials cannot be trusted. He added that the daily salary for many of the immigration officials at the points of entry (POE) can not even cover the cost of gasoline needed to and from work. The security manager noted that immigration and customs officials regularly accept bribes, (on a recent personal trip, econoff saw a Dominican customs official at the Santiago airport receive money from a Dominican passenger as she attempted to clear her luggage).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Due to the lack of trust and high levels of corruption, the Immigration database contains only the information from a system called Impediments to Exit and

Entry (Impedimento de Salida y Entrada). This system is a local watchlist that informs the immigration official of any individual who has a judicial problem within the country. It is managed by the Attorney General's office. All government agencies can submit information to the Attorney General's office for review; and if approved, the Attorney General's office will add that individual to their watchlist.

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ADDITIONAL WATCHLISTS
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¶4. (S) After receiving the information from the Dominican immigration office, Embassy sent reftel B in accordance with the suspense date. However, after the London scare in mid-August, emboff drove out to Las Americas international airport to get a first hand look at the Dominican immigration database as well as a tour of the security checkpoints and personal meetings with immigration officials, airport security, interpol, airport management, and members of the National Department of Investigations (DNI-Intelligence).

¶5. (S) Emboff found that the Dominicans do have watchlists that are more robust than the watchlist used in the immigration database. The following is a revision of Embassy's answers:

¶A. (SBU) IS THERE A NAME-BASED WATCHLIST SYSTEM USED TO SCREEN TRAVELERS AT POES?

(C) Yes. The Immigration database has a watchlist that is a name-based system and is called Impediments to Exit and Entry. It is found at all entry and exit points at POEs. The Department of Investigations also has a name-based watchlist, but this system is located only at entry points at Dominican POEs.

¶B. (SBU) WHAT DOMESTIC SOURCES OF INFORMATION POPULATE THE NAME-BASED WATCHLIST, I.E., NAMES OF DEPORTED PERSONS, TERRORIST LOOKOUTS, CRIMINAL WANTS/WARRANTS?

(C) The watchlist within the Immigration database is managed by the Attorney General's office and consists of individuals who have legal and criminal problems in the Dominican Republic. All Dominican law enforcement agencies can submit information to the Attorney General's office for review and if approved for submission to the watchlist. An entirely separate Intelligence Agency (DNI) watchlist consists of information gathered from DNI sources, the national directorate for drug control (DNCD), the national police, and the J2 (Intelligence) of the Armed Forces. Emboff confirmed that they have terrorist lookouts in their watchlist.

¶C. (SBU) WHAT INTERNATIONAL WATCHLISTS DO HOST COUNTRIES USE FOR SCREENING INDIVIDUALS? SUCH AS INTERPOL OR TSA NO FLY LISTS, UN, ETC.

(C) DNI officials use terrorist watchlists from a variety of sources and the Interpol watchlist.

¶D. (SBU) HOW ARE WATCHLIST SYSTEMS NETWORKED BETWEEN PORTS OF ENTRY (AIR, LAND, SEA)?

(C) According to Dominican officials, all airports and seaports are networked via hardline. The remote border posts receive updates via a diskette on a weekly basis.

¶E. (SBU) ARE WATCHLIST SYSTEMS LINKED TO A STANDALONE OR INTEGRATED IMMIGRATION DATABASE BETWEEN THE IMMIGRATION, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES?

(C) Officials claim that the Impediments to Exit and Entry watchlist is integrated with local law enforcement and intelligence services. The DNI watchlist is not integrated among other government agencies.

¶F. (SBU) WHO CAN ACCESS THE WATCHLIST INFORMATION?

(C) Dominican officials state that the immigration office, DNI, DNCD, and the national police can all access information from the Impediments to Exit and Entry watchlist. Only DNI officials have access to the watchlists on the DNI database.

1G. (SBU) WHAT ARE THE POLICIES/PROCEDURES WHEN A WATCHLISTED INDIVIDUAL IS ENCOUNTERED?

(C) Immigration and DNI officials state that when an individual is found to be on one of their watchlists, he or she is escorted to secondary and from there to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

16. (S) The separation between DNI and immigration officials is not easily noticeable at the POEs. Upon entering the country, passengers are greeted by two immigration officers. However, the first "immigration" officer is an undercover DNI official who checks the passport's name against their watchlists. If no record appears, the officer hands the passport to the real immigration official, who collects the immigration form and runs the passenger's name against their watchlist (Impediments to Exit and Entry). If no record appears, the passenger is allowed to exit the airport.

17. (S) Comment. The systems that are in place are effective only if the officer follows normal procedures. Due to high levels of corruption, low salaries, and a lack of close supervision, it is apparent that individuals can slip by if they have the connections and the money. There are no checks and balances and if the officer at the immigration desk wanted to assist a criminal, the officer would simply an incorrect name into the watchlist, so that no record would appear. End Comment.

18. (U) Drafted by Chris Davy.

19. (U) This report and extensive other material can be consulted on our SIPIRNET site, <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/> .
BULLEN